The AMERICAN SPECTATOR

A LITERARY NEWSPAPER

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The AMERICAN SPECTATOR

A LITERARY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

WITH this issue *The American Spectator* celebrates its first birthday. The results of the past twelve months have been so gratifying that we are even more cheerful than we were a year ago, when the unprecedented success of our first number sent us back to the presses five times. In these days of financial stress and uncertainty it is pleasant to have launched a new enterprise which has not shared the fate, common to so many activities, publishing and other, of finding itself "in the red." Our promise to retire to our estates, should *The American Spectator* become a bore to our readers or to ourselves, remains still to be redeemed. We have leased our estates and propose now to concentrate our attention on Volume II.

The coöperation of our readers and contributors has, of course, alone made this possible. During the first year of our existence innumerable imitators have attempted what has been defined as the sincerest form of flattery. They have had their little hour of oblivion and are already gone. From which we are bound to conclude that ours is not a formula magazine, and that the newspaper format and brief articles are not enough. In order to produce, as one reviewer has described it, "a forty-cent magazine for ten cents," something more is apparently required. What that is we leave the public to guess.

We do, however, know what is *not* required and have, as originally announced in this place, carefully avoided it. We have advocated no cure-alls, we have preached no gospel; all evangelical crusades on behalf of belated intellectual, economic, and political side-shows have been abjured. Our unfriendly critics were most insistent upon the fact that this policy spelled the doom of *The American Spectator*. Our lack of juvenile enthusiasm, our failure to sponsor some stale nostrum or other with the adjective "New," were regarded in some quarters as the final proof of our utter futility and decadence. We are glad to be able to report that this view has evidently not been shared by increasing thousands of our readers, both at home and abroad. As we recall the fate of various naive evangels and sophomoric missions during the past eighteen months, we thank whatever gods there be that we long ago discovered that Queen Anne was dead.

The American Spectator has aimed consistently at providing a platform for the free expression of intelligent ideas, provided they are not propounded as absolute dogmas, and are presented—whether argumentatively or imaginatively—with the vigor of an open mind. If any important points of view have been absent from our columns, it has not been because of any prejudice on the part of the editors. As they maintain their right to disagree amongst themselves, occasionally with a charming violence involving the throwing of bee bottles, so they also invite those from whom they differ to disagree with them.

In these days of "criticism by exorcism," when dogmatism seems to be the last refuge of ignoble minds, our attitude has been strangely misunderstood by the various species of literary dervishes. When they are not engaged in confusing mere vituperation and ill-temper with criticism, they succeed in convincing themselves that *The American Spectator* editorially champions whatever cause they oppose. By the venerable we have been described as frivolous; the immature hold that we are senile. Jewish zealots accuse us of anti-Semitism, while the anti-Semites reproach us with our preoccupation with the Chosen People. Our Marxian leanings chill the blood of the Union Club, but Moscow denounces us for not ladling out the usual propaganda pap. From the Mother Country comes the complaint that our English contributors are not playing the game, so far as domestic products are concerned. The Emerald Isle, observing the presence in our columns of the two outstanding Irish writers since the war, promptly laments the absence of Mother Machree, and suggests that we are tools of British oppression. Our supposed contempt for woman's intellect was so evident that we were credited, before Hitler, with endorsing the policy of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche.*

This diversity of attack, it seems to us, is precisely the best proof of the soundness of our point of view, and the response of the public has further demonstrated the wisdom of that point of view as an editorial policy. Five minds with but a single editorial thought may be a possibility in the ranks of the well-dragooned worshippers of some fetich; it is a monstrosity in the realm of educated opinion. Having had much experience of publications supposed to make no compromise with the public taste, to be above such sordid considerations as practical success in reaching a wide audience, we are only too well aware of the extent to which they are gagged and censored by doctrinaire theories, from which no contributor is allowed to depart. We have neither defied the public taste nor compromised with it. We have preferred to let *The American Spectator* reflect, in so far as possible, a fair cross-section of what normal, intelligent men and women think and feel about life, in general, and some of the specific problems of our time, in particular.

ROBINSON JEFFERS AND WILLIAM FAULKNER

by ROBERT LINN

HARLOTRY has long been practised in the world. So has yellow journalism. The former is a democratic art, open to all kinds of creative pornographers who may practise any wiles on any men. From the stews of the Egyptians and the high places of the Hebrews to the specialized rooming houses of the Americans, the souls of men have been ruled by the bodies of women. Harlotry was promulgated, for the most part, by the unintelligent for the convenience of all men, being a vocation followed by women not clever enough to get or hold a husband.

Yellow journalism is a creation by the intelligent for the unintelligent. It supplies an inexpensive means of indulgence for those unenlightened and circling brains which would feed upon the carrion of yesterday's murder, perversion, or divorce. It is an application of psychology and a beautiful exploitation of the mob-mind.

Both harlotry and yellow journalism are good, healthy social evils. They make the world more interesting, but they do not make it complete. We still need a creation by the intelligent for the intelligent in America. Something which people may consider a social evil and yet which is really high class. I bring in Jeffers and Faulkner.

These two are artists for the intelligentsia alone, and it is lovely the way people in general regard them as a social evil—that is, if they have ever heard of them.

Jeffers has probably read the Bible too much and it has had a terrible effect upon him. In the Old Testament a great deal of attention is given to various little irregularities such as fornication, whoredom, adultery, incest, rape, and the lust of man for beast. There is the pathetic story of Lot, forced to lie with his two daughters, after they had framed him with wine. There is the piquant story of Bathsheba's potent sex-appeal, and there are innumerable commands concerning many interesting things one shouldn't do. The number of these warnings is a tempting indication of the pleasure to be derived from the forbidden.

Jeffers has given us these delectable bits in a salt-water version. He is like a Monterey prophet sitting on a cypress tree, crying blasphemies against man.

Faulkner, on the other hand, perhaps, has not read the Bible enough. He is altogether unorthodox, dealing in such heresies as corn-cobs and aphrodisiacs. Also, he is admittedly a yellow journalist with his "Sanctuary". His other books, however, prove him to be an unforgivable literary snob—a combination Gertrude Stein and humorless Aristophanes.

In drawing an impressionistic picture of these two writers, it is only possible to digress into a mad raving. Only a madman can paint the brain of a madman. The following sadistic flagellation of the reader will be administered with the masochistic admonishment: "This hurts me more than it does you."

* * *

Here is America. Stiff, stretched out like a corpse in disillusionment, being rolled into white bones—dice in the moon-rhythm. Stark, raw, ugly; a pair of huge fists with the skin rasped off the knuckles in their beating against black rocks.

Here are two Americas. Virgin lands, burnt over by a single forest fire. Black stubs of trees, still glowing red, like amputated limbs with fiery blood in the darkness. Here is the America of Jeffers: God-haunted, and feeling the writhing of God-like wrath in every little wind-blown dust-speck, in every helpless little cell. An America of Jeffers, by Jeffers, and with Jeffers: the Jeffers democracy; the Jeffers Utopia. A democracy where even the lowest, even the mightiest, feel the lash; a Utopia where the perfection is in the exquisiteness of the torture, the reaching of the ultimate in pain.

Jeffers writes the great American musical-comedy, in which the chorus is made up of dead men, and the daughter of Christ commits incest with God's grandson, while the audience of an ocean painted in patented colors laughs harshly with salt and sea-lions in its throat. An audience so full of loneliness that it looks with its mask at itself in a mirror and, seeing no eyes behind the eye-slits, goes insane. And always, Jeffers urging humanity into an insane attempt to be like an insane God.

The non-theistic Faulkner smirks at being in such company. "Give me my home-brew and leave me in the midst of my vomit," he says impressively. For he was in the war you know, war you know, war you— "This is no child's game," he interrupts; "Be quiet for I am performing the abortion of living." Then he proceeds to prove that living is an abortion of infinity. Placing a thumb solidly against his nose, he starts the Faulknerian opera with the signal of a loud blast from his cold-inflamed nostrils. "Bebbory believes logger thad dowig rebebbers." This he says in his belief that the eighth-month needs a little more illumination. He names his monstrous offspring "Light in August" and is proud of its virgin birth. When the light goes on and we open the book, there are murder and rape turning on the spit over the flames of arson. Nothing is omitted, except virtue.

* * *

And we, the literati of the United States, prayed to the Gods for a literary genius to be our king. They sent us Poe and he gobbled us up like frogs with his criticism and his bleating of art for art's sake. We protested and they sent us Whitman, who made our dirty minds blush with his purity. We protested again and the all-knowing Gods have dropped this mighty splashing log of a Jeffers down into the puddle of the Pacific ocean. And we stand and gape in our stupidity.

And we, the people, prayed to the Almighty Dollar and He sent his only begotten son, the half-fannied Faulkner, to be our lord and master of materialistic prose. Let us resign ourselves. Faulkner's writing may smell as bad as some of his corpses. But perhaps it is our noses which are not attuned to the exquisite perfume of a dead body.

Since the Hitlerian re-establishment of Aryan supremacy is today apparently a question of the first magnitude, the Editors wish to ask how comes it that that blond Scandinavian giant, Gandhi, representative of a 98% Aryan country, has not been consulted?

THE FORTY IMMORTALS OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

G. P. Baker	Nelson Lloyd
Ray S. Baker	Edward S. Martin
Richard Burton	F. J. Mather, Jr.
Robert W. Chambers	Charles Moore
H. C. Chatfield-Taylor	Harrison S. Morris
J. B. Connolly	Will Payne
Owen Davis	Arthur S. Pier
Charles de Kay	Ernest Poole
Harry Stillwell Edwards	Felix E. Schelling
Chester B. Fernald	H. D. Sedgwick
Jefferson Butler Fletcher	Burton E. Stevenson
James Forbes	F. J. Stimson
Worthington C. Ford	Austin Strong
Arthur Goodrich	Augustus Thomas
Robert Grant	Ridgely Torrence
Hermann Hagedorn	E. W. Townsend
Clayton Hamilton	William P. Trent
G. McL. Harper	John C. Van Dyke
Charles Downer Hazen	Paul van Dyke
M. A. De Wolfe Howe	Charles Warren

SNOBBERY IN ENGLAND

by J. S. SOUTHRON

THE exceedingly unconventional, natural and unsnobbish English author, Mary Webb, seems to have been entirely without any of the sniffiness that clings, like the bouquet of an old wine, to those of the English who class themselves mentally—and their friends in allusion—as "county" or "country house people." During the war, being straightened for money, Mary sold her own garden flowers in a public market; and her latest biographer is at pains to explain away the indelicacy of this action. Behind his carefully constructed hypothesis of an artist searching for experience one senses Mary's family, who "authorized" the biography. Their susceptibilities, at any cost, are very exactly spared.

That is so excessively and so typically English. You can't stand up in a public market, scraping shoulders with Tom, Dick, Harry and their complemental females; not if you are doing it to make money for yourself. For charity, of course, is another matter. Should you happen, however, to be "one of those writin' fellers," or the feminine equivalent, eccentricity will palliate the offense. It being conceded, in many quarters nowadays, that Mary was a genius, her indecent exposure is amusedly explained. "Not quite the thing, of course; but these artists!" If she had sold her nosegays surreptitiously at the backdoor, or had touted among her friends for sympathy and discreet if condescending custom, there would have been no loss of caste. But a stall in a public market!

It is horrific and terrible in certain English circles—that would, in earlier days, have been known as "genteel" and still deserve the title—to speak candidly and simply about lack of money. It is quite correct, of course, when surrounded by every evidence of wealth, though you may, in sober truth, be woefully in want of ready cash, to declare, "My dear, I haven't a penny!" Or, driving your new and expensive motor-car, to exclaim plaintively that "Bob has had to sell his hunters! Those wretched taxes!" Nobody is made uncomfortable. But for Mary Webb, for instance, to write angrily to a friend that she'd lived for several days on tea and bread and scrape wasn't the thing at all. She should have said nothing or pretended she was dieting.

It is a branding and shudderful thing, too, among the genteeler English classes, to mention payment for services you have rendered or are about to render. The present writer was coached in Latin for a Matriculation examination by a brilliant but impoverished clergyman who shied off from any faintest allusion to fees. At the close of the term, however, a letter arrived "suggesting" a by no means inconsiderable sum as "honorarium." Teachers in very expensive girls' boarding schools are supposed to be beyond the coarseness of needing money before the end of three months. However badly a girl might want an advance she would sooner die than ask for it.

And working your way through college isn't done. Well-born but poor girls are still to be got for next to nothing by way of salary as "lady" companions or "gentlewomen" helps or governesses; are treated, sometimes, as "one of the family," not always in itself an inestimable boon, and are considered by struggling professional male relatives to have "kept their end up." They haven't, at any rate, let the family down by earning money in any obtrusive way that would have advertised the relatives' own lack of means.

During the war there was a lot of very snobbish unconventionality. Young and sometimes fascinating Honourables and other titled women acted as grooms or chauffeurs to aristocratic friends. It was quite all right, smart and patriotic for girls to cart manure, feed pigs, nurse Tommies or officers—in different hospitals, of course—provided you did it "voluntarily"; that is to say without monetary or other tangible reward, buying your own uniform, which was usually artistic and costly, and defraying any incidental expenses yourself. Girls unable, from lack of means or connections, to get in at this end of the patriotic business had to be content with the genteeler jobs; considered, because of class significance, but "for the duration" only, to convey less of distinction. Country house hospitals run voluntarily had, perforce, to have a few trained, professional, paid Sisters in charge and, while most of the responsibility and the bulk of the more difficult work fell to their lot, they were felt, by the majority of the voluntary people, to be an inferior breed.

In the village of Ledbury, where John Masefield's family lived and, for all the present writer knows to the contrary, may still live, John was supposed to have disgraced himself, his "people" and his class by going to sea as he did instead of by way of a cadetship in the Royal Navy. Even when he was already an acknowledged and sought-after poet his works were displayed apologetically in the local stationery and book shop. Now that he is famous he is regarded as an acquisition; his youthful vagaries being explained by genius. Ledbury has learned to be proud of John; but only because outside applause gave the cue.

II

Since titled women took to having shops in the West End of London and dragooning all their friends into running up bills with them, it has been extremely right to have "a little hat shop, my dear," or a confectionery and tea shop, or a bric-a-brac and home-made oddments shop in any small town or village; but you must be very superior and condescending about it; wear earrings and your best afternoon frock all day or, if it is a sporting district, very severe tweeds and brogues; and you must, on no account, be fussy about bills. If you can drop a few hints about it being just a hobby, so much the better. You are in a different class from the girl in the post office who is merely a Civil Servant.

The English Council School is the equivalent of the American Public School but it connotes a separate and lower caste. Thereby hangs a lot of silly snobbery. Many a professional man's widow, left very badly off, will half starve herself to send her boys—the girls still don't matter quite so much—to one or another of the expensive Public Schools that, despite the name, are both private and exclusive. To be an "old boy" of any one of the top half dozen of these confers a social distinction superior to any other in England or wherever English people congregate.

The writer remembers, in a Kimberley tram-car, coming across a conductor who turned out to be an old Etonian. Misfortunes not unconnected with elbow-lifting had reduced him to very poor circumstances; but another old Etonian, recognizing him, by Public School freemasonry, and his accent, to be one of themselves, invited him home for a week-end. The ex-Etonian tram-conductor was found to have clung all along to silk underwear and a somewhat ancient but wearable dress suit. No reformation was subsequently reported but, even if the gutter should claim him, another Etonian will, invariably, spot him as having "belonged." An ex-Council School boy, no matter how brilliant his achievement, would never be on a similar footing, however much the Public School man might attempt to dissemble his feelings.

G.P.'s—or General Practitioners—as English country doctors are called, are notoriously ill or, rather, casually and seldom paid. So unprofessional is it to advertise, that the higher you consider yourself in the social scale the less obviously do you flourish the name on your door-post. A brass plate about the size of a small visiting card is as far as some G.P.'s go. To indicate your name and profession in any other way, in a window, for instance, is anathema. With a careless gesture, you send in your bills at Christmas and, if especially lucky, may get a tenth of what is owing you in about five or six years' time. (A conservative and optimistic estimate.) Were it not for his panel or Government patients many a doctor would have to shut up shop or, rather, surgery, which sounds more genteel. The sop to the country doctor is that, if he happens to be "well-connected"—that open sesame to English society—he is the social equal of anybody. There are, undoubtedly, many poor tired wretches who would prefer a little hard cash and fewer invitations.

You don't escape snobbery in England by belonging to any particular class, however exalted or debased. Leaving aside the extremely intricate question of gradation of rank among the old landed and titled aristocracy, consider the professional and trading classes. A doctor's or barrister's daughters do not mix in the same sets to which the smaller tradespeople belong even if the latter, as is not infrequently the case, have the more money; though if you are "shop" on a big enough scale you may soar to any social height. The butcher's family is felt to be several strata below the Parson's, unaffected by the fact that the sons of the butcher may be studying to become doctors or solicitors.

It should be explained that, in England, members of the lower branch of the law are called solicitors. There is a distinct cleavage between them and barristers, who belong to the higher branch. The butcher's male offspring might, conceivably, be articled to a solicitor. Only a very brilliant and ambitious exception would dream of becoming a barrister. That most barristers make no money to start with and, unless they have a friendly solicitor in the background to feed them briefs, rarely rise at all, while solicitors usually make at least a living and, in many instances, become wealthy, has no bearing on the question of prestige. The ranks of literature and art have, as everybody knows, been added to, often brilliantly, by briefless barristers, who do not, however, carry their rank with them into the arts. A writer or painter starts at scratch socially; though Public School and family connections can, sometimes, form a not unuseful preliminary business wedge.

On the other hand, a man who is obviously a "gentleman"—that is, a Public School man or well-connected—can take up any more or less mechanical work, such as running a garage—or he may go in for private market gardening—without losing caste. He may, for instance, run his fruit and vegetables round to his friends' houses in the family car or motor-bike trailer or specialize in selling the produce of his bee-hives privately. The higher his rank and the more grandiloquent the name of his residence the greater a sport he is considered. In one case known to the writer the country houses in several adjacent counties were supplied with honey from a very ancient castle, the owner of which took his produce about the neighborhood himself. In another instance the possessor of a highly venerable name would call in the morning delivering vegetables from the motor-cycle which conveyed his wife and him to dinner at the same country house in the evening.

Rarely does it happen that such experimenters will decide to cut out the social and concentrate on the profit-making side; and it is impossible to combine the two successfully. That is why the "gentleman" farmer, in England, at all events, is never a financial success. He rides to hounds, attends all the big races, keeps up the usual social round, runs up to shows in Town, which means London, and loses money wholesale. But, being an amateur, he has not ceased to be a gentleman.

England's wide-flung net of social shibboleths is, in fact, the strongest proof that her democratization is, as yet, only skin deep. At heart she is still deeply, if secretly, Tory.

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I SAW SALLY RAND DANCE

by THE REV. FRED SMITH

Pastor of the First Congregational Church, Newton, Kansas

I HAD not expected to see her dance when I went up to Chicago to The Century of Progress World's Fair. The simple reason was that I was not even aware of the existence of anyone by the name of Sally Rand. Yet, I thought that I had some acquaintance with the modern interpreters of the dance. True, my knowledge, such as it is, is rather bookish. How could it be otherwise when one lives in central Kansas? I had read of Pavlowa and Isadora Duncan in their prime, dancing now, it is to be hoped, in Paradise. I had a slight knowledge of Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis. Others, whose names I have forgotten, I had heard about by reading occasional books—hard to borrow in central Kansas—rather than by actual sight.

Then came the chance, unexpectedly, to see Sally Rand dance. A local friend, knowing of my intended visit to the Fair, had told me, a minister, not to fail to see "the Chicago" while I was in the Windy City. I went and found myself in luck. Sally Rand was being featured at one of the theatres. At last I had a chance to see an outstanding dancer. At least, my recollection is that in some such terms was she placarded. I also recalled that I had seen something about this dancer in the papers. But it was not about her dancing. It was about her fans. The purity organizations were up in arms against her. Evidently something had gone wrong for her, but not for the theatre. It was packed to the doors. I wiggled, advanced by sporadic runs, from row to row until I settled, victorious, on the end seat of the third row on the middle aisle. That was near enough for me. The front row was a paradise tabu to such as I.

Then came the program. Curiously enough, I cannot remember what it was. I recall an announcer, shaped like a tub, wearing a white sweater which inflated him to something suggestive of a balloon, swaggering back and swinging forth as he came along to megaphone the numbers. Oh, yes, I now remember. There was a singer. I am sorry, but I confess I prefer the second soprano in my church choir. This singer, I mean the one in the theatre, as she raucously sang about something I have forgotten, seemed to one listener to be afflicted with a nervous movement closely related to St. Vitus' dance. The movement began on the half turn, as she looked out coquettishly on her audience. The tremor was a down thrust from the neck affecting the torso (the woman's, not mine) in a perpendicular fashion until it reached her knees. Here it struck a ridge of weakness giving the faintest suggestion of collapse. But she saved herself. Restored to straightness, the half turn began again, the song meanwhile continuing all the time.

But I had come to look the theatre over and (added prospect) to see Sally Rand dance. I cast my eyes to the ceiling, round the balcony and—a ripple of applause. The singer and her song were gone. The obsequious announcer was again in evidence. He was announcing, as one who brings on an appetizing hot turkey, the epiphany of Sally Rand. He became discursive. Sally was a little late. She had been detained. "Of course you all know the trouble she is having in appearing before the public." Then a pause. A knowing look. Then, as mellifluously as a megaphone can achieve mellifluousness, came the modulated announcement: "Sally Rand has now—er—probably, now put on—er—her fans." Then, briskly and with a swinging, æsthetic sweep of the arm: "Ladies and gentlemen: Sally Rand!"

The curtain swung back. A dozen dancing girls appeared, clothed in black sateen, each with a long cigarette holder poised for action. Sweeping, curving, smoking, they pirouetted about the stage. It was good stuff. Then they subsided artistically on a stair-case fixed centrally on the stage. A pause. The curtains parted and—, oh, yes, just as the curtains did their part my attention was deflected by three people passing my seat to the front row. I knew there were no seats vacant there. But they evidently wished for none. The two men perched themselves on the stage steps and the woman officiously took a seat, or rather a lying posture, between them. It flashed through my mind that in our town in Kansas that was an offense against the fire protection ordinance. But I caught my breath and thoughts and swiftly turned my eyes. There she was—Sally—a vision of loveliness. I saw two large fans held as cover for a human form and for a face looking out from above them. I thought it revealed sadness. But the orchestra was playing on and Sally Rand was coming down. At least the fans were. How gracefully she could do it. A long diaphanous veil trailed behind her. Then the dance.

II

I have never seen Pavlowa or Duncan, or any of the later outstanding dancers. One cannot live in central Kansas and see such things. But I saw Sally Rand dance and was satisfied. Her fans were geometry come alive. It was a study of two triangles as related to curvature. She swung to the stage side and, guarded well by her fans, someone unloosed the long flowing veil. And then she was—well, the announcer had hinted it. But another unappointed announcer was telling it.

As Sally's fans went curving delightfully about the stage, my attention had been distracted from time to time by a heaving restlessness on the part of the prone woman on the steps. She had her own system of curvature, too. As the fans came closer she became more and more excited. She raised herself and hissed to one of the men: "Yes, she is!" I wondered, "Is what?"

But Sally Rand and her fans were what I was there to see. I gave my attention to the combination. It was drawing nearer. A further movement on the part of the woman on the steps. Yes, she was trying to see what was behind the fans. I thought: "Vulgarity." But I did not think it out loud. My eyes were following the fans so deftly hiding Sally, yet expressing her. A small tornado struck the woman lying on the steps, as Sally receded. She evidently was also satisfied. She whispered fiercely: "Yes, you can see—!" But I will not say what she could see. I rather think it would not be allowed to be printed anyhow.

But Sally Rand was making her final sweeping curve with the fans. The dance was ended. Slowly she ascended the stairs and at last I saw Sally Rand, but it was as Moses saw God, from the cleft of the rock. (See Exodus 33. 20-23.)

The curtains closed. I rose to go. So did the three on the steps. But they did not come back to go out. They had seen what they wanted to see, even if the woman had to do it lying down. Like a miniature hurricane they breezed on the stage and went behind the curtain. That was the end of them for me. I walked out.

A week later a friend told me they were after Sally Rand. Her case was to come up in court. I said, enigmatically, "I thought as much." I had seen too much that day. At least the three on the steps had, especially the woman whose lying posture had struck me as not being æsthetic. Perhaps it wasn't ethical, but I was there to study æsthetics, and will leave it at that. Yet, with regard to Sally Rand, I had *not* seen too much. I had gone to see her dance. I saw the dance. I again repeat: I saw Sally Rand dance but I did not see Sally Rand, except as Moses saw God on that already mentioned occasion.

As I came out on State Street, I saw staring me in the face: "'This Nude World.' Eighth Smashing Week." I wondered if the lady on the steps had been there too. I am still wondering. I also saw in the Art Institute: "Portrait of Nude Descending A Stairway." Surely that could not be Sally Rand!

And now I am back in Kansas, back where none know of Sally Rand and her kind, save those who went up to Chicago. She and her fans are not a problem for us. Kansas has its own problems. These are neither here nor there. I am thinking of the purifiers in Chicago: the prone lady and her male escorts. I think I have in them three reasons why, in the city of The Century of Progress World's Fair, that which is called Art would be allowed to exist only as a form of death if such as they who sat on the stairs of the stage ruled the world.

Lost: Somewhere between '29 and '33, the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves. If found return to The American Spectator, 12 East 41st Street, New York. Reward.

CULTURE CLUB

by SYLVIA MEYER

"DR. VOLTMER?" inquired a self-assured voice over the telephone of a recently arrived minister at Pinesburg. "This is Mrs. R. A. Clark, president of the Culture Club. We should like to date you now for a book review the first Tuesday in December, Dr. Voltmer. Our only specification is that it be something quite new. Our ladies read so much, you know, that if you can give us something just off the press. . . . We have heard so much about you, Doctor, you being a liberal and all."

"Thank you, Mrs. Clark, that's very kind of you. Let's see now. Are you familiar with 'Young Woman of 1914'?"

"But that's so old, Doctor, why it must be out almost a year. And isn't it a bit shoddy? I mean aren't its morals a little questionable? I always say I can't see why anyone wants to write a book like that when there are so many worth-while subjects. What good does it do? If it had a good moral—. But when people sin and it ends all right. She was just a thoroughly bad girl. And when there are so many good, self-sacrificing women. I mean I think foreigners look at things so differently and—."

"Of course, of course, quite, Mrs. Clark. Perhaps an autobiography—say, 'The Story of My Life,' by Clarence Darrow?"

"Well, really, I haven't read the book, Dr. Voltmer; my husband simply wouldn't permit me to have it in the house. Any man who pokes fun at the most sacred things in life and thinks criminals ought to be allowed to run around loose like those two Jew boys he got off with a life sentence. Now don't misunderstand me, Doctor, I am a broad-minded person, and I have nothing against Jews in particular. Of course, we don't take them in our club, but I think Hitler is going a little too far. But I say a criminal is a criminal whether he's eighteen or eighty-one. No, I can't see this Darrow person. Perhaps I'm just dreadfully old-fashioned, but to me the Bible is the Bible, and that's all there is to it!"

"Of course, quite right, I'm sure, Mrs. Clark. 'In Tragic Life' is quite new, but I fear it wouldn't do at all—it comes under your classification of shoddy, most decidedly."

"Disgusting! I would call it positively degrading. I read parts of it twice in order to be able to tell the ladies of my club the sort of thing they are up against in some of these modern novels. Don't get me wrong—I'm no Puritan. I like a clean dance and a good game of bridge as well as the next one, though I always say you can have just as much fun when you don't play for money. Anyone would think there's nothing to life but sex, and as I tell my oldest daughter Marcella, she's only sixteen and has known the facts of life since she was six—through flowers and things, you know—I tell her that while boys might date girls that smoke and drink and pet, when it comes to marrying they want a sweet, pure girl. Don't you think I'm right, Doctor?"

"Very wise, I'm sure. Well, there is a splendid new Negro novel that—"

"Oh, Doctor—please! You see I wouldn't mind in the least, but one of our ladies is from the South, and naturally she is very sensitive on the subject. Personally, I have nothing against niggers—I always say they make by far the best servants. You get hold of some of this white trash, and they'll simply eat you out of house and home, and everyone knows Dumas was half black. But Mrs. Calhoun, the southern lady, you know, can trace her relationship direct to Lee through a fourth cousin, and you can see for yourself how embarrassing it would be for all of us."

"Hilaire Belloc has a—"

"Pardon my interrupting, Doctor. I meant to tell you before—we prefer not having Catholic writers. I hope you won't think that is narrow-minded of us. I myself am entirely without prejudice—I think that is one of the earmarks of an educated person, don't you? But I do think it is wrong for Catholic girls who have been trained in Catholic institutions to teach in our public schools, only of course that is another question, entirely. I am such an ardent American myself that I always say if the public schools of our great land aren't good enough to go to, then they aren't good enough to teach in. I think—"

"Of course, of course, quite. Suppose we just let it ride for the present, Mrs. Clark, and then I can call you when I have found something suitable?"

"That will be splendid. I enjoyed this little visit with you so much, Doctor. I hope now you will feel that you know me."

"Of course, quite, Mrs. Clark, quite!"

THE UNITED FRONT OF THE JEWS

by ALBERT HALPER

NOT so long ago, when Hitler rode into power on the crest of the Nazi wave and began his crusade against the Jews, there issued such a blast of rage, indignation and denunciation from the entire body of aroused American Jewry that truly one was led to believe a united front at last had been formed from the bickering ranks of the Hebraic citizenry in this country.

Those who knew anything about American Jewry at all were aware of the countless internal struggles in the past over Zionism, nationalism, orthodoxy and reformism. But the torturing, maiming and economic annihilation of German Jews was carried on in such a fiendish, systematic fashion that all petty differences among various bodies and sects here were instantly swept away. All joined hands at once and yelled until the whole world heard.

Those who protested loudest were of course the Jews of German descent here who still had relatives in their ex-Fatherland, though the local Communists ran them a neck-and-neck race, after details of wholesale brutality directed at the heads of their comrades in Germany became known. The first few days and weeks during and after the terror were days and weeks of fiery and righteous indignation. Many hot wires were sent to our vigilant State Department in Washington; there were statements and manifestos concerning a powerful boycott of German goods; and a hardy band of veterans from the World War volunteered to organize and do something about it. Big rallies swung into action; there were parades; and at a tremendous mass-meeting in Madison Square Garden, which was on a national radio hook-up, the mayor of New York, the state senator, an ex-governor and other functionaries spoke. On that platform sat over a hundred and fifty men, rich Jews, poor Jews, reformed Jews, orthodox Jews, bankers and delegates from the ranks of labor. Several wealthy personages immediately pledged large sums of money and the speech-making against Hitler went on far into the night. A campaign to raise two million dollars to help the Jews driven from their homes, businesses and jobs in Germany was inaugurated, and soon other drives started. The campaigns are still going on. There was rejoicing in temples and synagogues all over the land because at last American Jewry, which had been split right and left and had always been a divided and bickering mass, had at last become aroused and cemented into united brotherhood.

II

A few months ago I was on a farm in upstate New York, working quietly on a novel, when a telegram arrived for me. When I opened the envelope my heart began to hammer, for there, right before my very eyes, printed in that large font purple type used by the Postal Telegraph Company, was a brief message from my literary agent in New York stating that there was a chance of my getting a contract for the movies. Only a young struggling writer, whose fingers have never known the crinkly feel of a thick wad of greenbacks, or an obscure choir singer in Arkansas who has suddenly received a bid to star in Manhattan grand opera, can appreciate the sensation I got as I read and re-read the short telegram. It said:

Will You Accept Five Week Movie Contract For Two Hundred Dollars a Week Stop Answer Yes or No

I wired back yes and asked for particulars, and that very afternoon another telegram came, instructing me to come to New York at once. So I took the first train to the city.

My agent met me at the station.

"Listen," he said, "it looks like it's all settled. At last you're starting to make a few shekels for yourself. They want to hire you." And he told me all about it.

My legs began to tremble with excitement.

"But why should they want to hire *me?*" I asked when he was finished. "New York must be full of surplus scenario writers since the hatchet fell out in Hollywood. Those boys really know something about movie technique. I know nothing at all about a movie script. Why—?"

My agent, a patient soul, heaved a patient sigh.

"In the movie business all things are possible," he explained. "Listen. You wrote a book, didn't you? Some one out in Hollywood read it and said you were the lad to write this script. That's all! The movies!"

Then he stepped into a telephone booth nearby and called up the producer who was putting the picture across. The producer had been in a hurry to get me into town, he couldn't wait, he had instructed my agent to tell me to grab the first train. But when my agent 'phoned him, the producer wasn't in; he left word that he had gone to see a prize-fight at the Polo Grounds.

"It looks like it's settled anyway," said my agent, stepping from the booth and seeing my face. "Here are the facts. This fellow, this man who is about to hire you, has just checked out of Hollywood and is turning independent producer. He has all kinds of connections and for a proposition like this all the rich Jews in New York will knock each other down to get into line to hand him money to make the picture. The picture will hurricane the country. It can't go wrong. And you'll write it."

I swallowed in my throat. As we started walking up the street my agent resumed.

"Keep this to yourself and don't tell a soul," he said. "The idea is so hot he doesn't want the other film companies to get a whiff of it. Listen. It's going to be an anti-Hitler picture. Do you hear? It's going to be an anti-Hitler picture and you've got a chance to write a movie that'll be something more than a box-office attraction; you've got a chance to strike a blow against hate and bigotry; you've got a chance to do something fine, you've. . . ."

But I was walking on air already, and the winking lights of Forty-Second Street blurred in my eyes as I went along.

III

The next morning, at ten o'clock sharp, I met the producer in a Times Square theatrical office, which he had just leased as his headquarters. He was an open-faced young man in his late thirties and I liked him right away. He had had considerable movie background, having been a supervisor for one of the bigger West Coast studios for years, and I saw at once I was dealing with a man who knew his business. As soon as we shook hands, he closed the door against his secretary in the outside office. Then he turned to me.

"Of course all that I am about to tell you is in strictest confidence," he began, then launched into the subject. "I take it that you have been reading about the recent increased Nazi outrages against the Jews in Germany and that you know something about the Nazi movement here. I take it also that your sympathies lie with the poor Jews who have been driven from their jobs and homes and some of whom have been mutilated and murdered."

Here I nodded, as he had paused and was looking at me.

"Now," he said, "the picture I have in mind is a picture that will show up Hitler and his gang for what they really are—opportunists who have been playing cleverly on the patriotic heart-strings of a desperate and deluded people. Of course, the picture will have to be put together with logic and care. A case will have to be built up. We will show, in the course of the movie, how Hitler, a non-Aryan type himself, is a fanatic for Aryanism, how his yelling for a healthy, pure-blooded nation does not quite mix, inasmuch as he has such men in his camp as Rosenberg the Slav, Captain Roehm, a notorious homosexual, who has been mixed up in some nasty affairs which are on record, and Goering, who has been a paranoiac for some time. There are several books and magazines we can consult for facts, and I have already hired a young German girl to translate articles from the German and Austrian press for us. But we'll have to work fast and the burden falls on you. The picture, as I see it, is a 'natural,' as we say in Hollywood. It fairly screams to be made. Now, as for the picture itself," and here we got down to bed-rock.

He outlined, in a few minutes, a brief synopsis of the scenario he had in mind. As he spoke he let himself go and, little by little, I caught his excitement. It sounded thrilling. What a chance to pull off something big!

The picture, as he saw it, was to be divided into three parts. The first section would deal with Germany on the eve of and during the war, the second section would deal with the chaos of the country and the growth of the Nazi party, after Hitler's beer-hall putsch in Munich in 1923, which was a flop, and the last section would depict the Hitler coup and the terror following it, with Jews fleeing toward the frontiers, tortures, defacing of synagogues, scientists and scholars leaving the country, books being burned in huge bonfires, and roving bands of Nazis drunk with victory. The scenes were to be short and graphic, also realistic.

The producer paused and looked at me and saw I was sold on the idea from the start.

"Another thing," he said. "I've negotiated with several newsreel companies for newsreels of Germany, which we can sandwich in, such as shots of historical interest, the Reichstag meetings, Nazi parades, meetings of French and British delegations, and so on. Not only is it lively, but it's sound stuff and, besides, it will give the picture the stamp of authenticity. I might as well tell you now that there has never been a picture like this produced before in this country, and we ought to rock the movie business wide open. And there's a bonus in it for you, if you do a good job," he told me, looking me square in the eye.

We were both pepped up about it and peeled off our coats, right there and then, and started working on the story. We had to have a human interest story, something that would run all through the picture and hold it together. And in order to build up a good case the theme, or plot, would have to be air-tight; we must make a good case for the Jews in Germany.

The producer rang for his secretary and, after warning her to keep the whole matter to herself, we began dictating. Now that I look back at it, I realize how fast and business-like and un-Hollywood we worked.

We chose as our focal characters a good, honest, average German-Jewish family of middle-class status. They were to bear the burden of our story. The father, Herr Bergermann, was a lawyer in good standing, a reservist in the army, fond of his family, his glass of beer, liking chess, and thoroughly loyal to his Fatherland. Like most Jews in Germany whose families have lived on German soil for generations, he was German to the core and considered himself as much a German as anybody. His wife was the same type, a good German house-wife. There were four children, two grown boys, a young daughter and a small son. By giving certain touches to the opening scenes we were to show that the family was fairly contented and asked nothing more than to live and let live. We were to steer clear of sentimentality or mawkishness, though we would insert a few sentimental touches here and there for warmth, and because certain facets of German middle-class life called for these touches.

We then switched to Hitler, working his background into the picture.

At the end of the third day we had the whole picture sketched out thoroughly. The synopsis read like wild-fire and the producer, who had read hundreds of formula scripts out on the coast, grew more and more enthusiastic. And we were sticking close to facts. The producer locked me up in a room in a hotel on Forty-Fourth Street, sent over a stenographer and told me to fire away. I was given, also, a collaborator for some scenes, a young woman scenario writer from Hollywood who gave me pointers on the technique of the movie. In so short a time, within three days, I began to eat, sleep and dream about Hitler, Nazism, Hitler's putsch, Hitler's meeting with Ludendorff, his first few successes, his bid for power, his interview and curt meeting with von Hindenburg, and the growth of the storm troopers. We worked in as many historical scenes as the picture could stand. As for the "love interest," I introduced a young gentile university student who fell in love with the Bergermann daughter, also at the university. This gave me an opportunity to work in the political activities of the German students.

Then there was to be a "lovers' quarrel," of course. But it must be logical, it must be in order. The gentile sweetheart was to be shown listening to Nazi speakers about the campus, he was to waver, then, believing Germany could only be "re-awakened" by a youth movement, such as the Nazis offered, he was to go Nazi. The next shot was to show him marching with the storm troops, in uniform, avoiding the girl's eyes.

From then on events were to move rapidly. Hitler was to be given plenty of footage. There were to be meetings, scenes of Nazis boycotting Jewish stores, propaganda directed against the Jews and, finally, the Hitler coup.

(*Continued on Page 3, Col. 1*)

QUERY

by THEODORE DREISER

IF a trial in London to ascertain the guilt or innocence of those accused of burning the Reichstag, why not a trial in Moscow to ascertain the innocence or guilt of Tom Mooney, or another in Paris to do as much for Sacco and Vanzetti, or yet another in Harlem to define the guilt or innocence of the Scottsboro Negro boys?

THE WORST BOOK OF THE MONTH

DER MYTHUS DES 20 JAHRHUNDERTS

By Alfred Rosenberg.

7½ x 5. Pp. xxi + 712.

München: Hoheneichen Verlag. M. 6.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE UNITED FRONT OF THE JEWS

(Continued from Page 2, Col. 4)

The terror was to follow with the frenzy of the victors shown, as mentioned before. In a stirring climactic finish, the girl's sweetheart would be shown deserting the Nazis after he has witnessed his fellow storm troopers beating up an old Jewish couple, and other atrocities. He and the Bergermann girl flee toward the frontier. The parents, too old to fight back or to flee, are taken in by a gentile neighbor and are hidden away, as the picture would end on scenes of Jewish women and children as well as men being beaten, Jewish cemeteries being desecrated, windows of Jewish stores being smashed and smeared over with foul anti-Semitic slogans. The picture was to be brought up to date, up to the last minute of making, with newspaper headlines, clippings, and radio speeches.

At the end of four days I had done considerable writing. I left the hotel only for meals and it seemed as if I had been working on the picture for months. My eyes began to grow bloodshot from too much reading far into the night.

"I want to start shooting the picture in a Long Island studio at the end of ten days," the producer told me. "See how fast you can work."

But at the end of the fifth day, when I saw him again and we went over several scenes in the script, I noticed that something was wrong. He had a tired, uneasy look under the eyes.

He was having trouble.

He never thought he would have this trouble.

He was learning how hard it was to raise money for an anti-Hitler picture in a city full of wealthy Jews.

He was interviewing Jewish bankers and going down into Wall Street.

He was hearing curt refusals on all sides.

He was amazed.

He was learning of the "united" front of the Jews.

He knew that some of the wealthy Jews he interviewed had sat upon that platform in Madison Square Garden, during the mammoth mass-meeting when Al Smith, Mayor O'Brien, bishops, politicians, as well as rabbis and other public spirited men of the Jewish faith, had denounced the atrocities committed by the Nazis.

In short, the producer was having tough sledding.

I felt genuinely sorry for him. But he was a fighter, he didn't give up. Thinking that perhaps he had judged wongly and that the movie was a bad business proposition, he went to see several big movie people in confidence. He saw Carl Laemmle and a few others who were in town, and all assured him instantly that the picture would make a fortune.

So he went back to the bankers again, fortified by sound arguments. He carried parts of the script into the canyons of Wall Street.

A few more days went by. I was uneasy, but finally received my first salary check, and felt it would be my last. However, I was told to keep on working at the script and so I started my second week on the job.

Then one night the man I was working for dropped in and, after talking about a few scenes, he confided in me how hurt he was. He said he hadn't gone into the proposition to make a lot of money, though the money part of it had seemed fairly attractive then.

"What I went into this thing for was because I felt such a picture should be made," he said. "I'm a Jew and this Hitler business struck me pretty hard when it happened. I never doubted for a moment that I could get all kinds of backing. I never thought about that at all. I thought that in a time like this, when hundreds of my fellow-Jews were being tortured and murdered, and when thousands more were being forcibly and shamefully deprived of their civil rights, that plenty of wealthy Jews here in New York would welcome me with open arms. Why, look here, the picture wouldn't cost much at all; I'd get the old newsreels practically for nothing. The whole business wouldn't cost more than a hundred thousand dollars. And we could open on Broadway right away and bust the movie world wide open. But I can't budge the big boys. I guess I went into this thing like a kid, hot-headed and naïve, trying to do something good."

I could see he was feeling pretty low. But what struck me most was his lack of bitterness about the deal. I had expected him to stride up and down the room swearing and cursing at the rich Jews who had refused to back his production. Some of them had professed to be very wroth about the Nazi outrages when the headlines had begun to shriek, and a few of them were in the habit of giving huge sums to the charities, sums larger than the mere hundred thousand dollars required to make the picture. I had expected the man I worked for to explode with rage. But nothing much happened. He was just hurt, that was all. He couldn't understand it and was just a little hurt.

"God, what a medium for a thing like this!" he said. "What a world of good we could do! We could pull off something big, something to reach out to millions and at last prove that American pictures are not merely the old-time Hollywood motions!"

"Well, I'll try again," he said before he left me.

And for the next few days he made the rounds and talked his head off trying to raise the money. But there was nothing doing, not even a peep. The books, the magazines, the newspaper clippings about Hitler lay in a heavy heap on his table down at the office. The little German girl brought fresh documents, neatly translated. An American correspondent, John Gunther, with headquarters in Vienna, cabled his hearty coöperation and volunteered to ship us facts about the Nazis, gratis. It was a picture that screamed to be made.

But the whole thing blew up in the air. On the tenth day the man I worked for admitted that he was licked. He told us he was ceasing operations. In other words, we were fired. So I checked out of the hotel, gathered all the script together and brought it over. It made quite a stack. We shook hands. He said he was sorry he had called me in from the country. He said he would send me a check for the few days over the first week I had worked for him. He said he was sorry he couldn't pay me for the full five weeks, according to our agreement. I told him it was all right the way it was. He looked pretty bad. But he realized at last that he couldn't put the picture through.

He realized he could get no money.

He realized that just because a lot of wealthy Jews had sat on a platform in Madison Square Garden as a protest against Hitlerism was no guarantee that they would shell out any American dollars for an anti-Hitler picture.

He realized at last that the picture wasn't "practical."

He realized it wasn't practical because many of these rich New York German-Jews had cash interests in Germany and didn't want any strong, anti-Hitler picture to cause "complications."

Geschäft is *Geschäft*.

THE COMPOSERS TURN BUFFOONS

by EDWARD ROBINSON

THERE are many humorous things in the history of music, but none is funnier than the so-called modernist movement of the past thirty or forty years. Never did a gang of imposters more successfully get away with murder than has the army of composers in Europe and America who, during that period, presented a long list of works as evidence of a new and revitalizing "revolution." By theory and logic, by conjecture and inference, by exhortation and by cajolery, they and their official apologists apparently proved that the old music was dead, its methods outworn and its principles hopeless beyond repair. Yet the actual stuff they offered as substitute has consistently been so dreadful, so ugly and so blatantly violative of the most basic elements in the art, that one would have to invoke a cosmic insanity as adequate explanation for the astonishing complacence with which it has been received. Surely, future historians will point to the whole episode as one of the standing jokes of our time.

A peculiar combination of external circumstances helped these musicians to a facile welcome. Some leading critic (I think it was Ernest Newman) promulgated the startling discovery that members of his profession had in the past made grievous errors of prognostication. One of them had even greeted the appearance of no less a work than Beethoven's "Eroica Symphony" with literary boos and catcalls.

Upon learning of this, all of the living brethren immediately were frightened into such a paralytic fear of posterity's ridicule that they abandoned their critical function ertirely, and with cautious courtesy seriously approved a chronicle of absurdities that would fill a jester's notebook to overflowing. Since only winners usually claimed history's attention, they decided it would be safest to bet on every horse in the race; and thereafter it didn't matter even if the composer were a misguided Messiah like Ernest Bloch, or a straightforward faker like Edgar Varese. All he needed was Maestro Stokowski's ebullient advance blurbs in the press, and the salaams of admiration invariably followed the performance.

The amateur public naturally dared not dissent. A professional conspiracy to popularize "high-class" music, moreover, had profitably swelled the laity to include an unprecedented number of dolts. Mouthing the old democratic shibboleths, smirking professors regularly reassured the most illiterate of them that since every man has ears he also has musical sense,—whereupon it became a mere trick of diligent publicity to secure universal benedictions for junk that an organ-grinder would ordinarily reject with disdain.

The composers were thus released from the normal checks upon their fancy, and they rapidly lost all sense of decency and restraint. Even leading exponents like Strauss, Schoenberg, Hindemith and Ravel pressed forward in their folly until such completely atrocious nonsense as Hindemith's "Concerto for Orchestra," Bartok's "Sonata for Piano," or Honegger's "Pacific No. 231" began to pass muster as genuine examples of the musician's art. The minor adherents and charlatans spewed out a mess of horrible imitations too numerous to mention; and frankly incompetent men like Roger Huntington Sessions, Quinto Maganini and other protégés of the Aaron Copland aegis were left free to perpetrate anything that could be cloaked with impassioned metaphysical significance in the program notes.

Matters finally reached the point where, to gain a hearing, one had either to employ steam shovels in the instrumentation, or else write with such brilliant obscurity (vide: *Gospodin* Mossolow, the latest of the Soviets) that no one could possibly understand what was being said.

One would have to deny the whole heritage of music to discover in these men an authentic manifestation of the creative impulse. Their self-avowed purpose has been the deliberate determination to compose in a manner violently opposite to that in which music had previously been constructed.

Now, the very intelligibility of the art has rested on certain inescapable requirements evolved and tested through centuries of painful effort. Form, for example, was incomprehensible without clearly defined and balanced tonalities. It had been possible to attain musical language, instead of gibberish, by formulating axioms of sentence structure that depended on the use of harmonic periods and cadences. The concept of rhythm as an intellectual expression rested on the employment of phrases based on these harmonic principles, and was further strengthened by the contrapuntal use of melodies themselves the outgrowth of the same process. All of these things, moreover, had gone through innumerable variations and permutations by thousands of composers in the past without the necessity of renouncing the fundamental tenets beneath.

The modernists, however, suddenly decided to scrap the whole business. Hindemith abandoned the necessity for definite tonality of any kind, and from that view issued the pestiferous breed of atonalists who have plagued the concert halls ever since. Schoenberg eliminated the logical steps of harmonic progressions until it was with difficulty that he or his disciples could evolve anything more profound than a puny sixteen-measure piano piece. Stravinsky destroyed the civilized meaning of rhythm entirely, and in things like the "Sacre du Printemps" (perhaps the juiciest of all the hoaxes) substituted a primitive metrical barbarism that would outrage the inteiligence of any but a particularly backward ape.

The swarm of noise-makers who followed them—including such joyless citizens as Respighi, Antheil and Krenek—finally reached the *reductio ad absurdum* where it was no longer necessary even to bother using musical instruments in the orchestra, or musical tones in the score. They had reduced the art to a ghastly form of vaudeville, and they themselves had obviously turned buffoons for the crowd.

It is difficult to see how this harlequinade can progress much further. Already the wreckage of acclaimed "masterpieces" thickly encumbers the living graves of all these figures, and it begins to look as if the entire movement must soon collapse of its own hollowness and exhaustion. Its inception was founded on a purely negative impulse which sprang from the weariness brought on by a crisis in Western culture. These composers behaved for all the world like a petulant child tired of its toy and bent upon breaking it up. Indeed, it is hard to escape the disquieting suspicion that their activity, instead of representing a truly creative need, was obeying in art the same cruel, destructive impulse which on a wide social plane during the same period had yielded among other things the spectacular horrors of the World War and the current German barbarism. The presence of outright cruelty as a major force in recent social relationships is certainly an obvious fact to the most casual observer; and since the indissoluble bond between art and life reaches into the most intimate recesses of the human mind, it was perhaps inevitable that an analogous artistic expression should be destined for our time.

Yet if music is to go forward, the modernist perversity must be considered as a backwash in the stream of development. We may accept the premise that great changes in social ideals have made parallel changes in music imperative. But it does not follow that alterations in stylistic and ideational content demand the utter destruction of the firm foundations which had carried the art through many previous metamorphoses, and which must continue to support as many new ones. On this naïve error, indeed, rests the absurdity of the whole contemporary bedlam.

The solid composers of the immediate future, therefore, are faced with the task of re-establishing the continuity which was broken when the modernists went wild. Schumann, and Brahms, and Franck are by no means dead, and no subsequent composer who fails to pick up the burning torch where they dropped it can possibly hope to achieve work of durable value. During the contemporary anarchy, one or two men—among whom Vincent d'Indy is a pre-eminent instance—steadfastly held to the great traditions of their predecessors, and demonstrated once again that it is not necessary to discard the alphabet in order to say original and beautiful things. It is time that Wagner, Strauss and Debussy—who fathered a false ideal, and thereby helped deflect the current of music into a stagnant pool—were put aside as childish things no longer fit to tutor mature minds. There can be no doubt that otherwise the art of music will remain in its present ludicrous condition.

THE SCRIBBLING CARAVANSARY

by JOHN CAMPBELL

SOMEHOW, shortly after the war, the notion became widespread in this country that the only way to shake the old home town effectively was to write one's way around the world. To tackle any metropolis, anywhere, became the goal of thousands of typewriter owners who descended without credentials or shame upon Hollywood, London, Paris, Shanghai and all out of the way points—north, south, east and west.

The disease spread and the infectious germs became so dangerous that the government had to be firm and insist that typewriters might be all right in their place but that passports and visa were still required.

From nowhere three or four hundred dubious correspondents appeared in Hollywood, formed a society and chiselled their way into the free lists of movie theatres, concerts and delicatessen galas.

Another thousand descended upon Montparnasse, Capri, Majorca, Aberdeen and Belgrade. Foreign officials were elated at the attention and envisioned new tourist records.

Steamship magnates were bombarded by journalistic tyros who would make any journey famous for a gratuitous passage. The mayors of the smaller Spanish towns didn't even mind the changing governments, so great was the attention they were receiving from the mysterious foreign legion of American writers.

Conversations aboard any trans-Atlantic liner sounded like a literary tea for a visiting English author.

"My dear, I'm just going to be in Paris long enough to collect a few impressions. I must dash off something here and there, you know, to pay for the trip."

The French were possibly the first to grow skeptical of this new belletristic onslaught from America. They had charged only twenty francs for a *carte d'identité* for a journalist and this was eighty francs less than the average tourist was required to pay. With this wholesale arrival of journalists something had to be done. Before the sub-committees of the Chambre des Députés could meet to discuss the matter, it was found that by unrolling more red tape they could exasperate the scribbling invaders into paying the higher tax. Finally the Bureau de Tourisme eliminated all free railway tickets but this had the unpleasant effect of sending the determined writers to other lands.

The late Frank Harris and the late D. H. Lawrence expressed wonderment that so many papers could be interested in interviews with them. One French playwright was likewise astonished that he should be asked by a well-known American weekly for an expression of opinion when its representative didn't know the name of a single one of his plays or that he hadn't written a line for thirty years.

The number of American writers who commenced to visit Scandinavia became so alarming that Selma Lagerlöf turned her home into a tourist showplace and gave away picture postcards of herself, while Knut Hamsun retired to a shack high above the fjords where even his wife was not welcome. And Axel Munthe fled from San Michele to a tower where he refused for a while to see anyone.

The Ritz Bar in Paris and the Long Bar in Shanghai became meccas where one couldn't enjoy a Sidecar without being pestered for comments by Americans who were "gathering impressions." After the first few years, the restaurant owners of Paris were compelled to refuse free meals and healthy postprandial *fines champagnes* to any and all who were writing books on the restaurant situation in the French capital.

Rejection slips of the more courteous organs of opinion were used as letters of introduction and credentials which civic officials could not overlook. They were so impressed by this new interest in their parks and monuments that they seldom bothered to pry further into the authenticity of the visitors.

As the mania spread, the writers grew bolder. If the depression had not intervened no one knows how far the fad might have gone. A shipping official in San Francisco told me recently that he had turned down more than 1,000 requests during the past year from young hopefuls who had desired to get around the world on his ships merely by writing publicity blurbs.

Europe is still full of the débris of the Scribbling Caravansary. No one who is an accredited correspondent is sure of his job, so persistent are the claims of visitors that they have been delegated to "send back a few stories of interesting things which catch my eye."

One woman who writes the art and drama notes from northern Europe for a leading New York daily told me that she had been compelled to take out eighteen newspapermen during the past year, not one of whom had since written a line but each of whom had arrived with credentials so carefully camouflaged that she was sure her paper was taking an added interest in her territory.

Moscow, Hollywood and Paris still remain the great centres for the imaginary space grabbers. And the *Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, Variety, The New York Times, Liberty, The New Yorker* and the film fan magazines remain the imaginary parents of these wandering children of the keyboard whose vocal demonstrations continue to make every European newspaperman eager to cash in on some of the American mazuma and take a whack at the same racket when he travels across his own boundaries.

From an extensive perusal of the tabloids, the Editors are reluctantly led to the conclusion that an honorable proposal of marriage is now tantamount to criminal assault.

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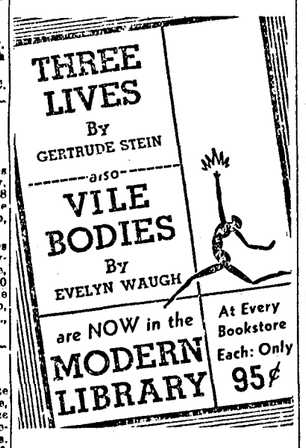

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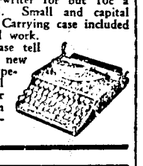

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UNPOLITICAL-MINDED AMERICA

by THELMA MAXEY

EARLY in the morning of election day, last November, my cleaning service returned a garment. The delivery-boy was a young Russian Jew emigré. "Voted yet, Paul?" I inquired. "You bet—and killed yours!" he flashed back with the satisfaction of a cat that has just consumed a nice juicy mouse.

The argument which followed was far from satisfactory. Nor was it the first time we had waded into a skirmish with our respective beliefs as gun-fodder in an attempt at conversion.

At length, however, he went his way, but still dealing out hissing, scratching expletives in unintelligible Slavonic that crackled in every direction, and I dived for my hat, preparatory to an immediate dash for the polls. But we made friends again, and were glad of the exhilaration of having met another who really had opinions and reasons to substantiate them.

At the polling place, I took my ballot and entered a booth. It had not occurred to me to take along my sample ballot, on which I had spent a week or more of preparation, for I was familiar with the content. Probably it did not take me more than five minutes to fill in my ballot, but even so, I discovered that the time was scarcely comparative to some of my precinct neighbors.

Outside my canvas-covered niche, I heard the voices of two women I could not see—I could not see them, but, obviously, one was officiating at the desk and the other was a voter. One said: "My! you must have had your ballot made up, you weren't in there two minutes." To which the other replied: "No, I didn't. But I was only interested in voting for the President. I just voted a straight ticket, and as for those things on the side—" meaning the amendments and propositions—"I hadn't read them, couldn't make head or tail to them if I did, so I didn't vote on them at all."

Which would you say, Mr. American, of the two, Paul—the Little Russian, Communist and a predictor of revolt in America—or this woman—probably your wife, your bridge partner or your children's school-teacher—is more competent to cast a ballot?

Paul, of course. And he is in earnest when he propounds his Communistic theories. Not that I gainsay Communism as a theory, but it is impractical, and just one of the impractical things to which America can look forward unless she educates or eradicates some of her voters. Women alone are not to blame either, though their unpolitical-mindedness surpasses all understanding, for few men have more to offer than superficial natter.

Ten years ago I was married to a man, a Prussian-German, who was applying for his final citizenship papers. On the evening following his examination, he asked me: "What are the three main divisions of the United States Government, and what power is vested in each?" I knew, of course, but I'm afraid my replies were not particularly lucid.

I considered him amusedly: "They are—well—ugh—huh—" I began. It was as far as I got.

Shortly thereafter I visited my home and asked the same question of my father, who for many years was a United States marshal. "Why," said he, "they're—ugh—huh—"

I informed him that they were not any such thing, and turned to my mother. She laid down the D.A.R. speech she was memorizing, laughed, and said "as far as she knew, they were."

The next person I asked was a family friend, a congressman, who very recently romped over the front pages of the newspapers with his bill deploring propaganda literature.

"My dear child," he began in expostulatory tones, "they are—eh, oh—ugh—huh—"

He waded into a grandiose speech, and at length divulged them, but it was rather putrid compared to the concise twenty-word definition he might have used.

Somewhere along the line it was necessary for me to purchase a small steak from Jim and "Ma" Ferguson's bull. As I have known them since I was three, or thereabouts, it did not come amiss to ask this simple question, and they chimed in chorus: "They are—ugh—huh—"

I asked a Missouri congressman. But the mule hadn't a thing on the Texas bull. I asked moving picture stars and restaurateurs, politicians and ditch-diggers, housewives and paunchy, pompous mill magnates. Only three gave me immediate and correct replies. One was Paul, another a Japanese vegetable-vendor, and the third an attorney.

I am an American, but I am fast losing territorial patriotism. America is the most slovenly-minded country in two hemispheres in every way, and particularly in politics. It weeps and wails about depression and rotten politics, and in the same breath ballyhoos the *Great I Am* with the horrifying clarity of a precocious child.

To have decent politics, it is necessary to have political-minded people. And please don't quote: "You can lead an ass to water, but you cannot make him drink." Nobody cares a hoot whether he drinks or dries up, but if he won't drink of his own accord, there is no reason why he should be allowed to matriculate through a rubber nipple.

II

How then? you ask. A simple pruning organization is sufficient to begin with. Not that the *Great I Am* can see it. It is far too simple. Take, as an example, the foreigner applying for citizenship, or your child graduating from school: he must pass an examination before he is given honors. Why not the voter? Make him get up from his mental pig-sty or get out. When he registers, force him to pass a questionnaire at least equal to that demanded of a steerage immigrant, and increase or change it with each election to keep him *thinking*—for his voting privilege. He will think fast enough then. Depend upon American vanity—or human vanity, if you prefer—for that.

Sometime ago I received a letter from a friend in Harbin. He wrote: "I am leaving on a new job for the Lloyd people; taking 750 German and Russian emigrés to Paraguay. Can you imagine the *fun*, with them divided into 700 different political camps?"

And no doubt they were. Foreigners eat, sleep, think and dream politics, and because they are products of revolutions, bolshevism and oppression, the politics are generally very bad politics. Yet they are migrating yearly to America, and they are, in nine cases out of ten, at the bottom of strikes, labor-riots and unrest. At the same time they know more of our politics and governing system than we ourselves.

Do you want more proof? Today I made this test in the twelve-unit apartment house where I live. In each home I asked: "Who are President, Vice-President, Secretary of State, Senators and Congressmen from this district and state, Governor, State Secretary, Representatives and City Mayor?" Mr. American, you won't believe it until you try it yourself. I spoke to twenty-seven adults. All knew the President. Four could not name the Vice-President. Only five knew who was Secretary of State. Six named McAdoo as senator but four of them did not know the other senator. Ten named one or more congressmen. Four could not think of the name of the Governor. The State Secretary drew a total blank, and the representatives were known to only two. Everybody knew the city mayor, but, as he was elected that week, I did not consider it a criterion. One of the persons who failed in but one question was a Canadian attorney, the other was an actor, born in Buda-Pest.

I asked them other questions, such as: What form of government have we? What is the supreme law of the United States? Who makes the laws? For how long are senators and congressmen elected? Requirements for a bill to become a law? Of what does City Government consist?

Answer them yourself, Mr. American. Perhaps then you will agree that someone should be authorized and directed to investigate the knowledge which the flexible provisions and privileges of our governing system has atrophied in the majority of American voters.

We are not an inbred race. We are polyglot, and becoming more so each year. Unless we repair our ship below the waterline, this prettily painted superstructure isn't going to help an iota in diverting depressions and revolutions and Communism, especially when another generation or two roll around, for we will be outmoded and overthrown by the children of immigrants now pouring in. Immigrants of whom we demand more than we ourselves know.

Or, at least, more than *you* know, Mr. American! For I learned, from a lot of foreigners, that the three main divisions of the United States Government, along with a lot of other things, are by no means just an "ugh-huh".

The Editors suggest that, since the United States has adopted an attitude of neutrality, the combined navies and marines of the Chase National Bank and the National City Company proceed forthwith—if it isn't too late by the time this appears in print—to Cuban waters.

SERVANTS OF GOD

No. 17

From the De Moines, Iowa, Register:

CHARLES CITY, IA.—W. C. Reckard; Sunday school teacher and farmer north of Rudd, will have a hearing here today on a charge of cruel and inhuman treatment to a dumb animal. Sheriff B. F. Atherton said he confessed mistreating a horse which refused to pull a heavy load of hay. According to the confession, Reckard saturated a burlap bag with distillate, wrapped it around the horse's belly band and set it afire. The horse reared, then stood still. Flesh covering three square feet was burned. Then Reckard, according to the confession, pulled the horse with a tractor, by hitching a log chain to its neck, and jabbed it with a pitchfork.

The Best Non Sequitur of The Month: "During the showing of 'Thunder Over Mexico' . . . loud voices could occasionally be heard in the rear. This, we learned later, was a discussion among Helen Woodward, Lincoln Kirstein and others, the parting shot of which was Mrs. Woodward's retort to Kirstein: '. . . when 12,000,000 people were out of work in this country, you were protesting against a movie.'"—From the New York *World-Telegram*.

As the figures of Lenin and Christ have been officially barred from Roxyfeller Centre, the Editors unanimously vote for the figures of the Roxyfellerettes.

WOMEN'S GOLD BRICK

by EDITH M. STERN

NO man, to paraphrase an old saw, is born a good lover; some few acquire the technique of love-making, but most must have it thrust upon them by the culture under which they live. At present our half-baked emancipation of women, our emphasis on physiology, and our hollow and feeble attempts to be casual, have brought the art to its lowest point. Other ages, it is true, have been sexually darker in their physical aspects. Repressions, at least, are gone, and a man no longer frowns upon a woman's exhibiting any signs of sexual enjoyment. But in the equally important emotional and psychological aspects of love-making, the average male is a total loss.

For women, in the course of their movement for emancipation, have proved their point too well. They have requested men to remove them from the medieval shrine and the Victorian pedestal; no longer do they desire romantic adoration combined with intellectual contempt. Men, not being by nature discerning, believed them when they said that they wanted (believing it sincerely themselves) a healthy, shoulder-to-shoulder treatment, in love as well as economics. Well, now they have it!

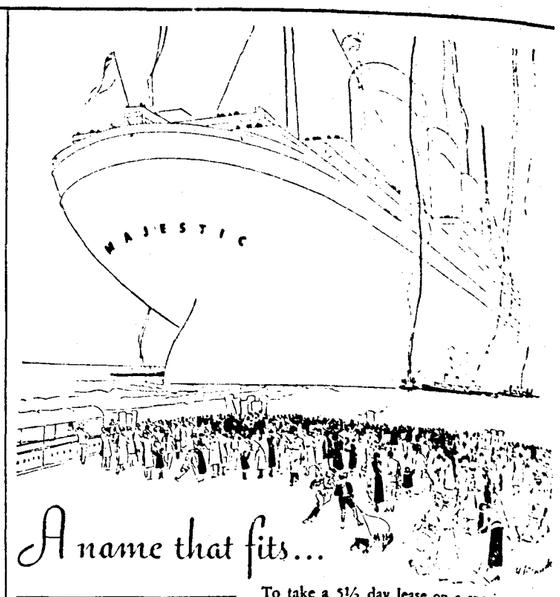
Under the predominant code a man never mentions the word love, for to do so would be both unfair and dishonorable. Neither party, he takes pains to make clear, must become emotionally involved. The pleasure of the moment must be enough. He is also scrupulously honest; if he is married, he emphasizes his devotion to his wife; if divorced, that he has no thought of remarrying; if single, that has no intention of having death do the parting. And he depends on the lady's good taste not to place him in an awkward predicament.

Furthermore, unlike the impassioned swain of another day, he does not plead. He does not beg. He does not worship. He reasons. He stresses his own prowess as a lover. He implies that he is doing the lady an immense favor by making love to her. Someday, he argues, there will be somebody. Why not himself? And himself, not because he implores her to put him out of his lovesick misery, but because he will be so good for her.

Such an attitude leads inevitably to a certain insensitivity toward women's moods. These modern gentlemen are incredibly crude and speedy in their advances, regardless of time, setting, or a woman's responsiveness. They make no attempt at the kind of personalization that women love. When repulsed, they do not, even figuratively, tear their hair or beat their breasts. They shrug, and imply that the lady is making a great mistake. As for themselves, it is a matter of little moment, for they can seek elsewhere and find speedily. This is not due to mere boastfulness; it is all part of a carefully devised scheme for not having matters taken too seriously.

This eminently sensible, fair and frank point of view works rather satisfactorily for men. They can, through protracted liaisons, enjoy most of the blessings of matrimony with none of its inconveniences. And their consciences are clear, for they have ruined no lives through misrepresentations.

But women are beginning to think that a little judicious and pretty lying might be preferable. They are beginning to feel that to be regarded as shy creatures who must be tenderly wooed is better than the current assumption that they are blithe sensualists who will leap into a pair of masculine arms at a moment's notice. They are beginning to wish that sometimes, even sometimes, men would ask for favors instead of conferring them. But above all, women are beginning to question this whole philosophy of the casual. It is all very well to enjoy the ecstasy of the moment, but when men's clumsy bunglings and offensive realism rob even that moment of ecstasy, is it worth the sacrifice of that permanence and stability which most women crave? Perhaps, women are beginning to suspect—and they dare not say it aloud as yet, for it will take a long time to re-educate men—that there is more happiness for them in a passionate submission desired by both parties than in a sane and casual partnership. Perhaps, after all, the illusion of love is preferable to the reality of desire.



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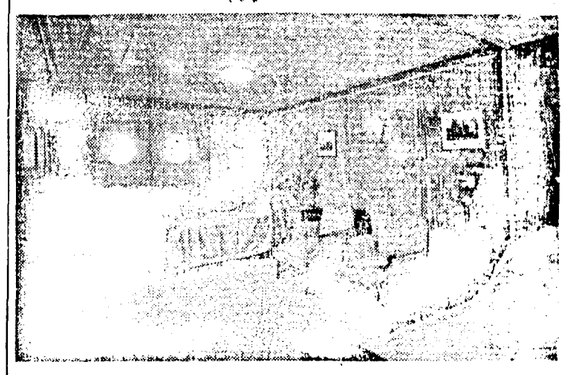

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